



Kristi Mathieson

26 Haley Road
Kittery, ME 03904
Cell: (603) 969-7496

Kristi.Mathieson@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

April 11, 2025

Testimony of Representative Kristi Mathieson in support of
**LD 613, An Act to Amend the Maine Death with Dignity Act to Ensure Access
by Qualified Patients**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health And Human Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and honorable members of Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Kristi Mathieson. I have the distinct pleasure of representing the beautiful seaside community of Kittery, House District 151. I am here to testify in support of **LD 613, An Act to Amend the Maine Death With Dignity Act to Ensure Access by Qualified Patients.**

This bill is deeply personal to many, myself included. My father died August 1, 2022. His death was very difficult, much more difficult than it needed to be. My dad was a strong, independent, hardworking New Englander. He retired at the young age of 82, he took care of everyone around him. He was my hero and so very kind. My dad loved life, he loved and planted his seven acres of gardens, he snow blew his driveway all winter long, and much to his family's chagrin shoveled off his flat roof every year. Up until six months before his death, he was fully independent - and then he was not. My dad wanted to be home, he chose to have home hospice but with workforce shortages, the difficulty managing pain, and the rapid progression of his illness things became insurmountable at home. The end of his life was extremely sad, painful and prolonged, this should have been avoided but it wasn't.

I am thankful Maine offers a death with dignity law but in a situation like my father's death, a condition precipitous (on one hand and prolonged on another), this law would not have offered an option to die with dignity. LD 613 will help someone like my father. This bill allows an attending physician to waive a portion or all of a waiting period for qualified patients to access end-of-life medication based on the qualified patient's condition and the attending physician's medical opinion regarding the best interests of the qualified patient.

To allow qualified terminally ill patients to choose a peaceful, controlled, and humane end rather than prolonged suffering brings immense psychological relief to the patient and family members. These laws respect individual autonomy, freedom and personal rights. It's only fair that these rights extend to how we face death. Dignity means being able to say goodbye to loved ones, be sure they avoid unbearable pain, and die in a manner consistent with family values and beliefs. I wish my dad had had this option, please be sure more Mainers do. Thank you for your time today.